



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

9 CFR Parts 317 and 381

[Docket No. FSIS-2022-0016]

RIN 0583-AD77

Uniform Compliance Date for Food Labeling Regulations

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Final Rule.

SUMMARY: FSIS is establishing January 1, 2026, as the uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations that will be issued between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024. FSIS periodically announces uniform compliance dates for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations to minimize the economic impact of label changes.

DATES: *Effective date:* This rule is effective December 20, 2022.

Compliance date: The uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations that will be issued between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024, is January 1, 2026.

Comments due date: Comments on this final rule must be received on or before January 19, 2023.

ADDRESSES: FSIS invites interested persons to submit comments on this rule. Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* This website provides the ability to type short comments directly into the comment field on this Web page or attach a file for lengthier comments. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions at that site for submitting comments.

- *Mail:* Send to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mailstop 3758, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

- *Hand- or courier-delivered submittals:* Deliver to 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 350-E, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

Instructions: All items submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the Agency name and docket number FSIS-2022-0016. Comments received in response to this docket will be made available for public inspection and posted without change, including any personal information, to <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Docket: For access to background documents or comments received, call (202) 205-0495 to schedule a time to visit the FSIS Docket Room at 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Rosalyn Murphy-Jenkins, Director, Labeling and Program Delivery Staff, Office of Policy and Program Development, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Telephone: (301) 504-0878.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On December 14, 2004, FSIS issued a final rule establishing January 1, 2008, as the uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry labeling regulations issued between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2006 (69 FR 74405). The 2004 final rule also provided that the Agency would set uniform compliance dates for new labeling regulations in 2-year increments and periodically issue final rules announcing and requesting comments on those dates. Consistent with the 2004 final rule, the Agency has since published eight rules establishing the uniform compliance dates of January 1, 2010, January 1, 2012, January 1, 2014, January 1, 2016, January 1, 2018, January 1, 2020, January 1, 2022, and January 1, 2024 (72 FR 9651, 73 FR 75564, 75 FR 71344, 77 FR 76824, 79 FR 71007, 81 FR 91670, 83 FR 63052, and 85 FR 81339).

The Final Rule

The new uniform compliance date will apply only to final FSIS regulations that require changes in the labeling of meat and poultry products and that are published after January 1, 2023, and before December 31, 2024. For each final rule that requires changes in labeling, FSIS will specifically identify January 1, 2026, as the compliance date. All meat and poultry food products that are subject to labeling regulations issued between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024, will be required to comply with these regulations on products introduced into commerce on or after January 1, 2026. If any food labeling

regulation involves special circumstances that justify a compliance date other than January 1, 2026, the Agency will determine an appropriate compliance date and will publish that compliance date in the rulemaking.

Two-year increments increase industry's ability to make orderly adjustments to new labeling requirements without exposing consumers to outdated labels. This approach allows meat and poultry producers to plan for the use of label inventories and to develop new labeling materials that meet the new requirements. It also serves to reduce the economic impact of changing labels on both producers and consumers.

In the March 5, 2007, final rule, FSIS received only four comments on the announced uniform compliance dates, all in support. In the March 5, 2007, final rule, FSIS determined that further rulemaking for uniform compliance dates for labeling requirements is unnecessary (72 FR 9651). The Agency received no comments on the 2007 final rule, the comments FSIS received on the 2012 final rule were outside the scope (77 FR 76824), and FSIS received no comments on the 2014 final rule (79 FR 71007) or the 2016 final rule (81 FR 91670). The Agency received four comments on the 2018 final rule, all in support. The Agency received four comments on the 2020 final rule; one was outside the scope of the rulemaking and three were in support of the rule. Consistent with its statement in 2007, FSIS finds that further rulemaking on this matter is unnecessary. However, FSIS is providing an opportunity for comment on the uniform

compliance date established in this final rule.

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563, and the Regulatory Flexibility Act

Executive Orders (E.O.s) 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety benefits, distributive impacts, and equity). E.O. 13563 emphasizes the importance of quantifying both costs and benefits, of reducing costs, of harmonizing rules, and of promoting flexibility. This final rule has been designated as a “non-significant” regulatory action under section 3(f) of E.O. 12866. Accordingly, the final rule has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under E.O. 12866.

This rule does not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities; consequently, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required (5 U.S.C. 601-612).

Paperwork Reduction Act

FSIS has reviewed this rule under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520) and has determined that there is no new information collection related to this final rule. Under this final rule, the Agency is establishing January 1, 2026, as the uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations that will be issued between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024. The relevant information

collection or record keeping requirements are covered under OMB approval number 0583-0092, Marking, Labeling, and Packaging.

E-Government Act

FSIS and USDA are committed to achieving the purposes of the E-Government Act (44 U.S.C. 3601, *et seq.*) by, among other things, promoting the use of the Internet and other information technologies and providing increased opportunities for citizen access to Government information and services, and for other purposes.

Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform

This final rule has been reviewed under E.O. 12988, Civil Justice Reform. Under this rule: (1) All State and local laws and regulations that are inconsistent with this rule will be preempted; (2) no retroactive effect will be given to this rule; and (3) no administrative proceedings will be required before parties may file suit in court challenging this rule. However, parties may be required to exhaust their administrative remedies before challenging in court any specific agency action that is the subject of an appeal pursuant to this rule.

Executive Order 13175

This rule has been reviewed in accordance with the requirements of E.O. 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments." E.O. 13175 requires Federal agencies to consult and coordinate with tribes on a government-to-government basis on policies that have tribal implications, including regulations, legislative comments or proposed

legislation, and other policy statements or actions that have substantial direct effects on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes.

FSIS has assessed the impact of this rule on Indian tribes and determined that this rule does not, to our knowledge, have tribal implications that require tribal consultation under E.O. 13175. If a tribe requests consultation, FSIS will work with the Office of Tribal Relations to ensure meaningful consultation is provided where changes, additions, and modifications identified herein are not expressly mandated by Congress.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, FSIS will announce this **Federal Register** publication on-line through the FSIS Web page located at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/federal-register>.

FSIS will also announce and provide a link to it through the FSIS *Constituent Update*, which is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, and other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents and stakeholders. The *Constituent Update* is available on the FSIS Web page. Through the Web page, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse

audience. In addition, FSIS offers an e-mail subscription service which provides automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. This service is available at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/subscribe>. Options range from recalls to export information, regulations, directives, and notices. Customers can add or delete subscriptions themselves and have the option to password protect their accounts.

USDA's Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and

TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Paul Kiecker,
Administrator.